



## MASTER FILE

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Attention:                Management Training Branch  
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Subject:                 Observation of Undeliverable as Addressed Questionnaire Delivery  
                                 in Clayton County, Georgia

### I. Introduction

On March 27 and March 28, 2000, I observed activities in Local Census Office (LCO) number 2953 in Clayton County, Georgia. This LCO in the south Atlanta metropolitan area served all of Clayton county as well as the southern portion of Fulton county. The primary purpose of my visit was to observe the processing and delivery of questionnaires designated undeliverable as addressed (UAA) by the United States Postal Service (USPS). Additionally, a secondary goal of my trip was to gather information about the Questionnaire Assistance Center (QAC) operation set up by that LCO.

### II. Observations and Comments

#### A. UAA Questionnaire Processing

Through conversations with the LCO manager, the Assistant Manager for Field Operations (AMFO), and an individual appointed to oversee the treatment of UAA questionnaires (UAAs), I learned about the procedures involved in UAA questionnaire delivery prior to my arrival. In an ad hoc move at the beginning of the operation, the LCO I visited had served as a coordination center for all of the LCOs in the Atlanta area. The UAAs for the entire Atlanta area were obtained

from the USPS. Over 60,000 UAAs were channeled through this LCO and organized according to ZIP code. Personnel from the other LCOs then took the UAAs for which they were responsible from LCO 2953's storage space.

After this process was complete, the LCO I visited only had 1900 UAAs for delivery. (Most of the 60,000 UAAs went to the LCOs corresponding to the more urban areas of Atlanta.) However, more ZIP codes were subsequently added to LCO 2953's workload, pushing its total to about 4400. Another modification took place when two ZIP codes were dropped, placing the final tally at approximately 3600 UAAs to be delivered by LCO 2953 personnel.

According to the three aforementioned individuals, the operation was running fairly smoothly. They did mention two confounding factors in their UAA delivery attempts. First, there were neighborhoods that presented concerns about safety. Second, the main Atlanta airport fell within LCO 2953's jurisdiction, and recent demolition due to airport expansion made locating some UAA addresses (or confirming that they were not there) more difficult. Each of these obstacles was deemed simply a function of the area and certainly surmountable.

The UAAs that could not be delivered went through a check-out procedure. This workflow, which involved wanding the questionnaires and preparing them for delivery to the National Processing Center (NPC), seemed very organized with great attention to detail.

The D-963 forms, which served as records of the UAA questionnaire delivery attempts, were also organized and set aside within this flow. The D-963 forms were delineated according to success or failure of the delivery. Reasons for failure were checked to verify their validity.

I was shown a pile of odd mailing packages that were received at the LCO that they thought unusual and did not know how to handle. For example, a questionnaire was forwarded from an address in Florida to an address in Atlanta which turned out to be UAA. Another census mailing package was unlike the rest of the questionnaires that they received in that it contained a special incentive letter and a calling card.

## **B. QAC Inquiry**

With regard to the setup of QACs and how well they were running, I spoke with the partnership specialist, the LCO manager, and another individual working with the QAC records. Over the course of the QAC operation, 53 QACs associated with LCO 2953 had been established. At the time of my visit, only 19 were actually in operation, since the operation was near its end. Even though

LCO 2953 was not as ethnically diverse as other areas of Atlanta, I learned that there were some pockets of Asian, Hispanic, Indian, and Haitian populations within its bounds.

The colleague who requested that I find out information about the QACs was particularly concerned with usage of the D-399 forms, availability of language forms, proper maintenance of the list of QACs in the Operations Control System (OCS) 2000 system, and identification of hard to enumerate areas. A D-399 form is the record of a single visit to a QAC; I learned that these were being used correctly and cataloged. I heard conflicting information about the availability of language forms. The best I could conclude was that they had no problems in obtaining the materials, but receiving the materials in a timely fashion was not always the case. I learned that the list of QACs was being properly maintained within OCS 2000; in fact, I was provided with a current list from the system. Hard to enumerate information was used to target areas where QACs might be helpful. The data were based on difficulty in recruiting, the senior population, and undercounted minorities, among other characteristics. Copies of tract action plans detailing this targeting were also provided.

The partnership specialist whom I met worked with two LCOs (2951 and 2953). She was very optimistic about levels of cooperation, and she believed that the advertising campaign was having a positive effect. She had worked with the decennial census in 1990 in the Los Angeles area and was finding Census 2000 to be a more positive experience in comparison.

#### **C. Observation of UAA Questionnaire Delivery**

I spent half a day with an enumerator attempting delivery of UAAs. There were some hitches during our journey, but I felt that I earned a good feeling for what the operation entails.

The main obstacle was a temporary loss of direction. Initially she was basing her hunt for the housing units and their streets on her prior knowledge of the neighborhood, but that proved to be ineffective. Using the map provided by the LCO, I helped her find her bearing.

Once we were on the right track and found the proper streets, she was unable to locate the majority of the addresses that were part of the workload I observed, and as far as I could tell she made no mistakes in this respect.

We discovered that a few of the housing units designated UAA were actually businesses. The enumerator had forgotten from her training the proper procedure in dealing with these, and I suggested she consult her supervisor. She did not

deliver them while I was with her.

There was also a supply problem. Plastic bags which contain the questionnaires and letters of explanation are usually hung on doorknobs in cases of successful contact. However, in this instance the LCO had no more of these bags. They were expecting another shipment soon. Consequently, the enumerator whom I accompanied was compelled to put the questionnaires with good addresses in alternative places.

The only other notable situation in my observation was a number of questionnaires that appeared to either be duplicates or mislabeled. Two streets -- Main and East Main -- ran parallel on opposite sides of a railroad track. Even though they were not technically the same street, the numbers seemed to correspond in that Main had only even numbers and East Main had the alternating odd numbers. Within the workload at hand were a number of questionnaires (probably ten to fifteen) that were addressed to Main but had odd numbers matching addresses on East Main. She did not deliver these and planned to discuss the scenario with her supervisor.

### **III. Conclusions**

The UAA delivery operation seemed to be going exactly as planned. Personnel at the LCO were very helpful in educating me on the processes there, and my experience in the field will certainly be valuable during my future evaluation work. The main cause for concern that I witnessed at the LCO was the delay in obtaining materials across more than one operation. The AMFO summed up his frustration with this phenomenon with the mantra "'just in time' equals too late, " meaning that the need for certain materials often arose before the supposed ideal date of actual arrival.

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